

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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P R 161008Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6445

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 2642

DEPARTMENT PASS NSC FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

H PASS SENATOR PERCY'S OFFICE FOR MRS. JACOBSEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS MILI TS US LY UR XF XA CU LE SY

SUBJECT: SENATOR PERCY'S TALKS WITH TUNISIAN PRIME MINISTER
AND TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SENATOR CHARLES PERCY, DURING PRIVATE VISIT TO
TUNISIA, ACCEPTED INVITATION OF PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA
TO CALL ON HIM APRIL 15. HE CALLED ALSO AND HAD DINNER
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY ON APRIL 14.

2. MIDDLE EAST: DURING OVERVIEW OF MIDDLE EAST, PRIME
MINISTER AGREED WITH SENATOR'S BELIEF THAT CLIMATE IN
MIDDLE EAST WAS NEVER MORE PROPITIOUS TOWARDS PROGRESS
FOR SOLUTION THAN NOW. NOUIRA FELT THAT ARAB POSITION
HAD BEEN EVOLVING NICELY, PARTICULARLY AFTER RECENT EVENTS
IN LIBANON, AND THAT NOW US DIPLOMACY HAS ITS BEST
CHANCE TO MEDIATE A SOLUTION. PERCY WARNED, HOWEVER,
THAT BEFORE GENEVA CONFERENCE IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR
US TO BE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT IN POSITION
TO CAUSE MISCHIEF.

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3. NOUIRA CONTINUED SAYING ARABS ARE SUFFERING FROM
WAR EXHAUSTION AND ARE READY FOR A SOLUTION. SEEING THIS,
SIVIETS SEEM TO BE TURNING TO OTHER AREAS (ANGOLA,
SOUTHERN AFRICA, SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA) TO FORMENT FURTHER
TROUBLES, ALL PART OF A STRATEGY DICTATED BY THEIR
WELL-KNOWN DOCTRINE. THEY SEE AFRICA AS THE WEAKEST
POINT FOR ATTACKING THE WEST. PRIME MINISTER RECALLED

TALK THREE YEARS AGO WITH CHO EN-LAI WHO WARNED HIM THAT SOVIETS WOULD GET AT EUROPE THROUGH AFRICA. CHOU ALSO TOLD NOUIRA TO "TELL BOURGUIBA THAT THE PILLAR OF SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA IS QADHAFI". HE FELT EVIDENCE OF THIS STRATEGY WAS NOW CLEARLY APPARENT.

4. AFRICA: SENATOR PERCY SAID THAT HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT CARTER'S CHOICE OF ANDREW YOUNG AS AMBASSADOR TO UN SYMBOLIZED CONCERN OF US FOR AFRICA. HE PREDICTED THAT IN NINE-TWELVE MONTHS MANY POSITIVE CHANGES WILL BE APPARENT. NOUIRA BEGGED PERCY TO REMEMBER THAT MANY AFRICANS DID NOT THINK LIKE AMERICANS. QADHAFI, FOR EXAMPLE, IS UNSTABLE AND COMPLETELY UNPREDICTABLE. PERCY REITERATED THAT EVIDENCE WOULD SOON BE APPARENT THAT THAT AFRICA IS RECEIVING TOP PRIORITY IN NEW US FOREIGN POLICY.

5. NOUIRA SAID THAT HE THOUGHT FRENCH AND AMERICAN COOPERATION BACKING ZAIRE AGAINST KATANGAN INVASION WAS GOOD SIGN, WHEREAS MAJORITY OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY STRADDLED FENCE, HESITATED. ON THE WHOLE, HE THOUGHT, WESTERN REACTION HAD BEEN TOO WEAK. PERCY SAID HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT ADVICE NOUIRA WOULD GIVE CARTER OR GISCARD IF ASKED REGARDING BEST APPROACH TO ZAIRE'S CURRENT PREDICAMENT. NOUIRA REPLIED THAT ZAIRE IS CLEARLY THE OBJECT OF AN AGGRESSION. HE ASSUMED US AND FRANCE HAD COLLABORATED IN SUPPORT MEASURES. HE ALSO NOTED THAT "NATO ADMIRAL" HAD SPOKEN OUT IN FAVOR OF FRENCH ACTION. ALL THESE WERE GOOD SIGNS.

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6. TUNISIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS: NOUIRA REPORTED NO SATISFACTION FROM SOVIETS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW. IN QUESTIONING KOSYGIN RE MASSIVE ARMS SUPPLY TO QADHAFI, NOUIRA WAS TOLD HE SHOULD NOT WORRY BECAUSE LIBYANS WOULD BE UNABLE TO USE MATERIEL PROVIDED FOR TWENTY YEARS. WHEN REMINDED THAT REGIMENTS OF MERCENARIES COULD USE IT, KOSYGIN REMAINED SILENT. TO PERCY'S QUESTION REGARDING NOUIRA'S VIEW ON FUTURE OF RELATIONS WITH LIBYA, NOUIRA STATED THAT GOT WISHES TO CONTINUE BILATERAL TALKS TOWARD PEACEFUL SOLUTION, WITHOUT MUCH HOPE FOR REAL SUCCESS. QADHAFI BASICALLY, HE SAID, WILL ACCEPT NO AMELIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA UNTIL GOT AGREES TO MERGER OF THE TWO STATES. MEANWHILE HE WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HARM TUNISIA. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD TOLD CHATY ON MARCH 29 THAT LIBYAN OFFSHORE BOUNDARY ACTUALLY RAN "FORTY NAUTICAL MILES WEST OF SCARABEO IV SITE". ASKED BY PERCY WHAT QADHAFI WOULD DO IF TUNISIA ATTEMPTED DRILLING IN DISPUTED

ZONE, NOUIRA REPLIED "HE WOULD SURELY STRIKE AT US".
HE FELT QADHAFI WOULD NOT START A GENERALIZED WAR BUT
LIMIT HIS ACTION TO CLASHES ON SEA AND LAND. AFTER ALL,
HE SAID, CASTRO HAS GIVEN HIM HIS BLESSING AND HE IS
FOLLOWING AN AGENDA WHICH HIS FRIENDS (IMPLYING SOVIETS
AND CUBA) HAVE AGREED UPON.

7. TUNISIA DEFENSELESS: NOUIRA PROTRAYED AT LENGTH
DEFENSELESS NATURE OF TUNISIA AGAINST QADHAFI IF HE DECIDED
TO STRIKE. TUNISIA HAS NOWHERE NEAR SUFFICIENT ARMS TO
THWART HIS POLICIES, EVEN WHEN IT IS KNOWN THAT HE IS
LIKELY TO RETREAT IF HE IS STOOD UP TO. TUNISIA NOW
CANNOT EVEN STOP OVERFLIGHTS BY ANY AIRCRAFT, IT IS AN
OPEN COUNTRY BUT NEEDS TO HAVE ITS SOVEREIGNTY RESPECTED.
PEOPLE THINK TUNISIA IS SMALL, A NOTHING. IT STANDS
POWERLESS AND SEES THINGS LIKE CASTRO GIVING QADHAFI
YEARS AGO. THE TUNISIAN POEPL E CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY
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GOT CANNOT STAND UP TO QADHAFI.

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6446

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 2642

DEPARTMENT PASS NSC FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

H PASS SENATOR PERCY'S OFFICE FOR MRS. JACOBSEN

8. NEW ADMINISTRATION POLICIES: SENATOR PERCY TOLD
OF HIS PLEASURE WITH EVALUATION OF WASHINGTON SCENE,

PARTICULARLY WHERE FOREIGN POLICY IS AFFECTED. PRESIDENT CARTER, SECRETARY VANCE AND DR. BRZEZINSKI HAVE REACHED OUT TO CONGRESS, EVEN OPPOSITION MEMBERS, TO HELP IN FORMULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY. IT WAS GOOD THAT UNDER SECRETARY HABIB HAD COME TO TUNISIA AND GOOD THAT HE HAD COME, AS ALL VIEWPOINTS MUST GO INTO MAKING MOSIAC FROM WHICH NEW POLICY WILL EMERGE. USG HAS ALWAYS VALUED TUNISIAN VIEWS AND ADVICE. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE USEFUL IN DEVISING NEW POLICIES. HE POSED ONE LAST QUESTION TO PRIME MINISTER: WHAT WOULD AFRICAN REACTION BE TO SOFTENING US POLICY ON CUBA? WOULD AFRICANS TAKE US REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH CASTRO AS ADMISSION OF DEFEAT OF PREVIOUS POLICY? NOUIRA REPLIED THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR FROM BEGINNING THAT US IS NOT CHANGING ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS CUBAN POLICY. IT MUST EMPHASIZE THAT IT HAS STUDIED CUBAN PROBLEMS DISPASSIONATELY AND NEVER ADMIT THAT PAST POLICIES HAVE FAILED. PERCY STATED THAT WASHINGTON IS AWAITING REPORT OF SENATOR MCGOVERN AFTER CURRENT VISIT TO HAVANA WHICH
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WILL BE BASIS FOR SERIOUS STUDY OF POLICY. HE LIKENED THE CURRENT US THINKING TO SUCCESS WE HAVE HAD IN TREATING

POLAND, ROMANIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS INDIVIDUAL STATES, ALTHOUGH IN NO WAY IMPLYING APPROVAL OF THEIR PUPPET STANDING WITHIN SOVIET SYSTEM.

9. TALK WITH CHATTY: DURING APRIL 14 TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY, MANY OF SAME SUBJECTS MENTIONED ABOVE WERE COVERED. CHATTY'S VIEWS, HOWEVER, BROUGHT OUT FOLLOWING POINTS WORTH NOTING:
(A) CONCERNING ISRAEL, A PERES VICTORY, PARTICULARLY IF MANDATE IS STRONG, WOULD PRODUCE A WELL-KNOWN HAWK AS GOI LEADER; BUT CHATTY SAYS "EVERY POLITICIAN OUT OF POWER IS A HAWK". HE SAW NO REASON WHY SUCH OUTCOME SHOULD DELAY MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION.

(B) CHATTY ATTACHES MUCH IMPORTANCE TO OUTCOME OF PRESIDENT ASSAD'S CURRENT MEETING WITH LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND BELIEVES SYRIAN ROLE HAS BEEN GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE IN LEBANON. BOTH SYRIANS AND ISRAELIS SEE THE DANGER OF LEFTIST EXTREMISTS.

(C) LACK OF STRONGER WESTERN SUPPORT FOR ZAIRE WORRIES FRIENDS LIKE TUNISIA WHEREAS SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS BOLDLY BACK THEIR PET FACTION.

(D) SOLID ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT BY THE US FOR TUNISIA IS VITAL FOR BOTH PRACTICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL

REASONS. US MUST GIVE SIGNAL BEFORE JULY MEETING OF
CONSULTATIVE GROUP THAT IT IS PREPARED TO BACK TUNISIA
SUBSTANTIALLY.
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